

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TUNIS 01330 131726 Z

43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03

OMB-01 RSR-01 /088 W

----- 041815

R 131625 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1155

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TUNIS 1330

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PGOV, TS

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA' S " RECOMMENDATIONS" REGARDING  
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA DELIVERED LONG- AWAITED  
SPEECH TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM  
ON MARCH 13. HE STRESSED IN PARTICULAR NEED FOR  
PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM BECAUSE TUNISIA STILL REQUIRES FORCEFUL  
AND CONTINUOUS RULE. NEW PROPOSAL WAS FOR  
INSTITUTION OF REFERENDUM PROCEDURE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE DIALOG  
BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND PEOPLE. AS EXPECTED, BOURGUIBA  
PROPOSED QUALIFIED SYSTEM OF VOTE OF CENSURE. ALSO  
PROPOSED, REGARDING SUCCESSION, THAT ELECTIONS FOR NEW  
PRESIDENT TAKE PLACE WITHIN 45 DAYS AND THAT POWERS OF  
PRESIDENT BE ASSUMED IN INTERIM BY PRIME MINISTER. SPEECH  
DELIVERED WITH OBVIOUS SINCERITY AND EMOTION, AND IN  
ATTEMPT CONCILIATE PRESENT DIFFERENCES IN TUNISIAN BODY  
POLITIC.  
END SUMMARY.

2. BEFORE GETTING TO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL  
REFORM, BOURGIBA STRESSED NEED TO ASSURE " INVULNERABILITY  
OF STATE" AND AT SAME TIME RE- ADAPT CONSTITUTION TO  
POLITICAL EVOLUTION. POINTING ONCE AGAIN TO EVIDENCE OF  
CONTINUING " TRIBALISM", HE SAID TUNISIA STILL NEEDS STRONG  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TUNIS 01330 131726 Z

AND RESPECTED GOVERNMENT.

3. HE SAID THEREFORE THT PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM MUST CONTINUE. HE NEVERTHELESS ACCEPTED PREVIOUS PROPOSALS FOR INCREASING POWER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. UNDER PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE QUALIFIED POWER TO VOTE MOTION OF CENSURE. IF TWO CENSURE MOTIONS PASSED IN SAME TERM OF ASSEMBLY, PRESIDENT COULD DISSOLVE ASSEMBLY AND ORDER NEW ELECTIONS. SPECIFIC SYSTEM PROPOSED IS SOMEWHAT INVOLVED AND WE WILL BE COMMENTION IN MORE DETAIL LATER.

4. TURNING TO SUCCESSION QUESTION, BOURGUIBA MADE VERY CLEAR EFFORT, BY FREQUENT REFERENCES TO WORK OF MONASTIR CONGRESS, TO CONCILIATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOT AND LIBERAL " OPPOSITION". HE PORPOSED THAT CONSTITUION BE REVISED SO THAT A SUCCESSOR PRESIDENT BE ELECTED BY POPULAR VOTE WITHIN 45 DAYS AFTER INCUMENT'S DEATH. HE URGED STRONGLY THAT INTERIM POWERS BE ASSUMED BY PRINE MINISTER RATHER THAN PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THAT MONASTIR CONGRESS HAD " RECOMMENDED" LATTER PROCEDURE. HE PUT THIS IN TERMS OF STRONG RECOMMENDATION TO ASSEMBLY BASED ON HIS LONG EXPERIENCE, BUT ALSO STATED THAT MATTER SHOULD BE DECIDED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF.

5. HE ALSO PORPOSED, IN ORDER STRENGTHEN PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM, THAT CONSTITUTION BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE FOR REFERENDUM PROCEDURE. " THUS CHIEF OF STATE WOULD BE ABLE CONSULT PEOPLE REGARDING PROBLEMS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE", AND REFERENDUM WOULD GIVE" CONSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER" TO DIALOG BETWEEN CHIEF OF STATE AND PEOPLE. PROPOSAL FOR REFERENDUM DID NOT DERIVE FROM MONASTIR CONGRESS AND WILL COME AS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

6. COMMENT: BOURGUIBA DID NOT NAME ANYONE SPECIFICALLY DURING THIS SPEEC H. HE MADE NO ATTACKS ON LIBERAL FACTION, AND WAS CIRCUMSPECT IN COMMENTING ON WORK OF MONASTIR CONGRESS. HE OBLIQUELY ATTACKED BE SALAH, BUT NOT BY NAME. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION OF SPEECH IS THAT IT REAL EFFORT TOWARD RECONCILIATION, AND SOME OF LIBERALS MAY BE ABLE GO ALONG, EVEN THOUGH BOURGUIBA'S RECOMMENDATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TUNIS 01330 131726 Z

DO NOT STRICTLY FOLLOW THOSE OF MONASTIR CONGRESS.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS CERTAIN TO ADOPT WHATEVER BOURGUIBA  
WANTS, BUT IMPORTANCE OF PROPOSALS LIES ALSO IN RESPONSE  
OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP INCLUDING " OPPOSITION".

7. SPEECH DELIVERED WITH CONSIDERABLE EMOTION; BOURGUIBA  
BROKE DOWN IN TEARS TOWARD END OF SPEECH WHILE DISCUSSING  
SUCCESSION PROBLE M.

SEELYE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 13 MAR 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973TUNIS01330  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** n/a  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** TUNIS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730331/aaaahxfh.tel  
**Line Count:** 127  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 07 JAN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <07-Jan-2002 by willialc>; APPROVED <24-Jan-2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 971210  
**Subject:** BOURGUIBA' S " RECOMMENDATIONS" REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM  
**TAGS:** PGOV, TS  
**To:** AF  
**SECSTATE WASHDC**  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005